



Democratic State of the Union Response Center

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DEMOCRATS FIGHT FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Americans are only as healthy as the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the communities where we work and play. As Republicans continue to protect the wealthy corporate interests that put them in power, Democrats are working to protect public lands and keep our air and water clean. Over the coming year, Democrats will work to build a safer and stronger nation where everyone has an equal opportunity to build a better future for themselves and their children.

Democrats are working to protect the health of our children and families Our children are especially sensitive to the environment - per pound of body weight, children breathe more air, drink more water, and eat more food than adults do. In addition, low-income areas are often heavily polluted, having a disproportionate impact on minorities.

Republicans are rolling back decades of bipartisan environmental progress. Republicans are moving swiftly to roll back decades of bipartisan progress on the environment – progress marked by such bipartisan landmarks as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act. Almost every day, the Bush Administration takes another step to undermine our environmental laws and regulations.

Republicans allow special interests to trump the public interest. Republicans are bending over backwards to manipulate our environmental laws to fit the needs of special interests. Republicans want to open up our most ancient and pristine forests to logging, open up the protected waters off our coasts to oil and gas drilling, and open up portions of our national parks, refuges, and national monuments to private development. For short-term profits for their allies, Republicans are willing to sacrifice clean air, clean water, and our most precious natural treasures.

Democrats are fighting for clean water. More than 40 percent of our nation's lakes, rivers, and streams are too polluted for fishing and swimming. Democrats are fighting Republicans' efforts to completely exempt many of our waters from the protection of the Clean Water Act and successfully fought Republican efforts to allow unsafe levels of arsenic in drinking water that can cause lung, bladder, and skin cancer.

Democrats are fighting for clean air. When 146 million Americans are breathing unhealthy air, it is simply unacceptable for Republicans to push to weaken clean air laws. Democrats are fighting to protect the Clean Air Act from GOP-proposed rollbacks that would exempt certain power plants and industrial facilities from pollution control requirements.

Democrats are fighting to clean up toxic waste. One in four people in America lives within four miles of a major toxic waste site on the 'Superfund' list. Republicans have allowed Superfund cleanups to slow down for the third year in a row. Democrats are fighting to protect our communities and keep cleanups on track. In addition, Republicans have abandoned the principle of "polluter pays" – shifting the costs of toxic waste cleanups onto taxpayers. Democrats are fighting to reinstate the "polluter pays" principle – ensuring polluters pay an appropriate share of the costs.

Democrats are fighting for clean energy. Democrats understand that we can reduce pollution and relieve our dependence on foreign oil by promoting a balanced, comprehensive 21st century energy policy that includes production of traditional energy sources, ensures reliable electricity, and promotes clean, renewable energy, such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass power – and using energy more efficiently.

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